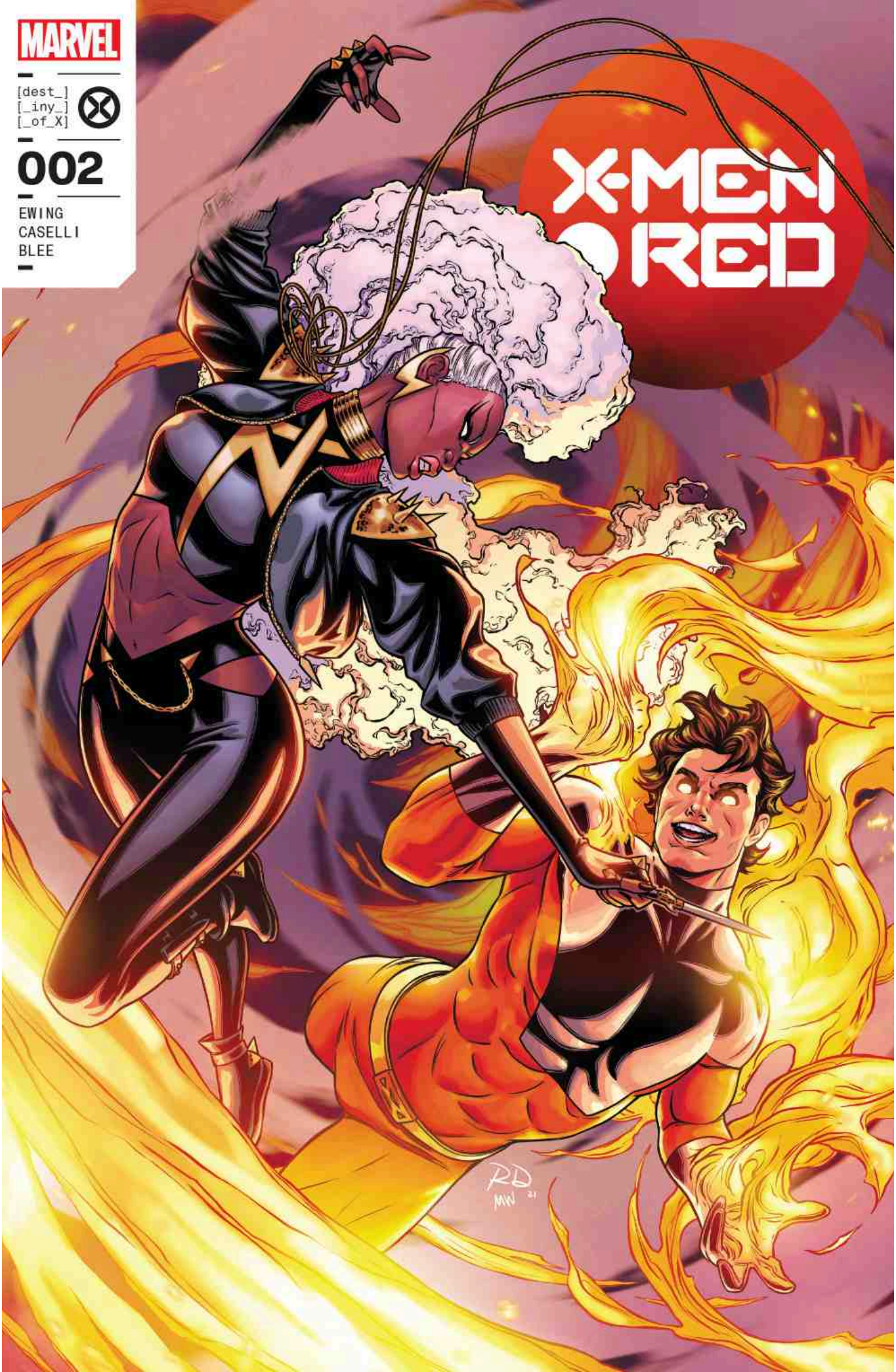
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002
EWING
CASELLI
BLEE
X-MEN
RED

THE SUMMER HOUSE. ON THE MOON. SOME TIME AGO.
"HE HAS FIRE WITHIN HIM..."
TRUE POWER INSIDE A BROKEN AND TWISTED HOST...
YES. BUT HOW BROKEN...
...AND HOW TWISTED?
WE'RE GOING TO RELEASE YOU BACK INTO YOUR UNIVERSE. THEY WILL SEE YOU AS CHANGED-- REBORN, HEALTHY AND WHOLE.
BUT THAT IS JUST A SHELL. UNDERNEATH IT-- BURIED ALIVE IN A SHALLOW GRAVE--
"--IS THE REAL YOU."
Is it happening now?
Hey.
Emperor.

Don't call me that.
You got visitors, Emperor.
Margarita?
It's not even lunchtime, Gabe.
I have to keep the fire down somehow, brother. Especially if I have to talk to him.
Why is Xavier here...?
It's about the Waiting Room. The "mutant afterlife" Wanda helped build for us.
While you were drunk.
We now have a way to reach dead mutants from before Cerebro achieved full resurrection functionality, Gabriel.
Thunderbird, for instance. Or poor Changeling.
Or... Petra and Sway.
...
Petra and Sway are right here.
Aren't they?

THE QUIET COUNCIL OF KRAKOA

NOTES RE: VULCAN/GABRIEL SUMMERS :: CHARLES XAVIER
FOR DISTRIBUTION TO ALL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Scott Summers has asked me to prepare some notes vis-a-vis the current situation regarding Gabriel Summers for the attention of the Council, and while I believe the matter to be well in hand, I do think it would benefit us all to be on the same page.

Put simply, Gabriel's mental state has become a serious cause for concern -- and the most obvious symptom of this decline is the presence of "Petra" and "Sway" in the Summer House.

When Vulcan first conjured energy constructs of his dead friends, it was an impressive, if unsettling, feat of mutant power. When he refused to accept that they were constructs -- when he became violently angry at the notion that they had not been resurrected as surely as any whose minds were actually stored in Cerebro -- the Summers family and I found ourselves at something of a loss.

I chose to believe -- perhaps foolishly -- that this was a healing process of sorts. A subconscious expression of grief that it was better to indulge than interrupt. In all other ways, Vulcan's nature had changed for the better -- surely this macabre shadow play would run its course as his mind healed further? Why risk an intervention that would surely do more harm than good? So I prescribed cautious observation. I even allowed "Petra" to visit Krakoa -- to teach a class of students! -- in the hope that this might be a way for Vulcan to lose his distrust of the island.

I was wrong. Despite my naive hopes, Gabriel has only deteriorated. He refuses to leave the Summer House -- or even the couch -- for days or weeks at a time. He drinks constantly. His imaginary friends call him "Emperor." Even if we were not on the cusp of resurrecting the true Petra and the true Sway -- thanks to the recent creation of the "Waiting Room" -- Vulcan's ghoulish puppet show could not be allowed to continue.

Therefore, I have made plans to once again confront Vulcan with what he's been doing -- and this time, with Scott's assistance and through deft use of my own abilities, to make absolutely certain that he sees the truth for himself.

I have total confidence that we will succeed.

No.
None of that is true.
Is it? It's not, is it?
You tell us, Emperor.
We're here, aren't we?
Have a margarita.
I'm going to reach into your mind, Vulcan. Help you see the truth--
You? Help me? No. Never again.
I can decide my own truth--
Please, Gabriel. Hold still.
NO! This-- this is a violation! I--I am Emperor Vulcan--
Get out! Get out of my mind!
GET OUT!

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X-MEN RED

WHO CAN TAME THE RED PLANET?

The mutants have successfully terraformed Mars, dubbing the planet anew as Arakko, and populating it with a mix of mutants from Krakoa and Amenth. Storm sits as the Regent of Sol on the Great Ring, the main governing body of Arakko, but the new outpost has a long way to go before the two disparate mutants cultures are successfully integrated...

...Especially as the Krakoan mutants aren't all in alignment themselves. As Brand makes moves to establish herself more in the new world, Storm makes a bold one herself: forming a new Brotherhood of Mutants.

[STORM]

[MAGNETO]

[SUNSPOT]

[BRAND]

[CABLE]

[VULCAN]

"Man on Fire"

02

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X-MEN created by **Stan Lee & Jack Kirby**

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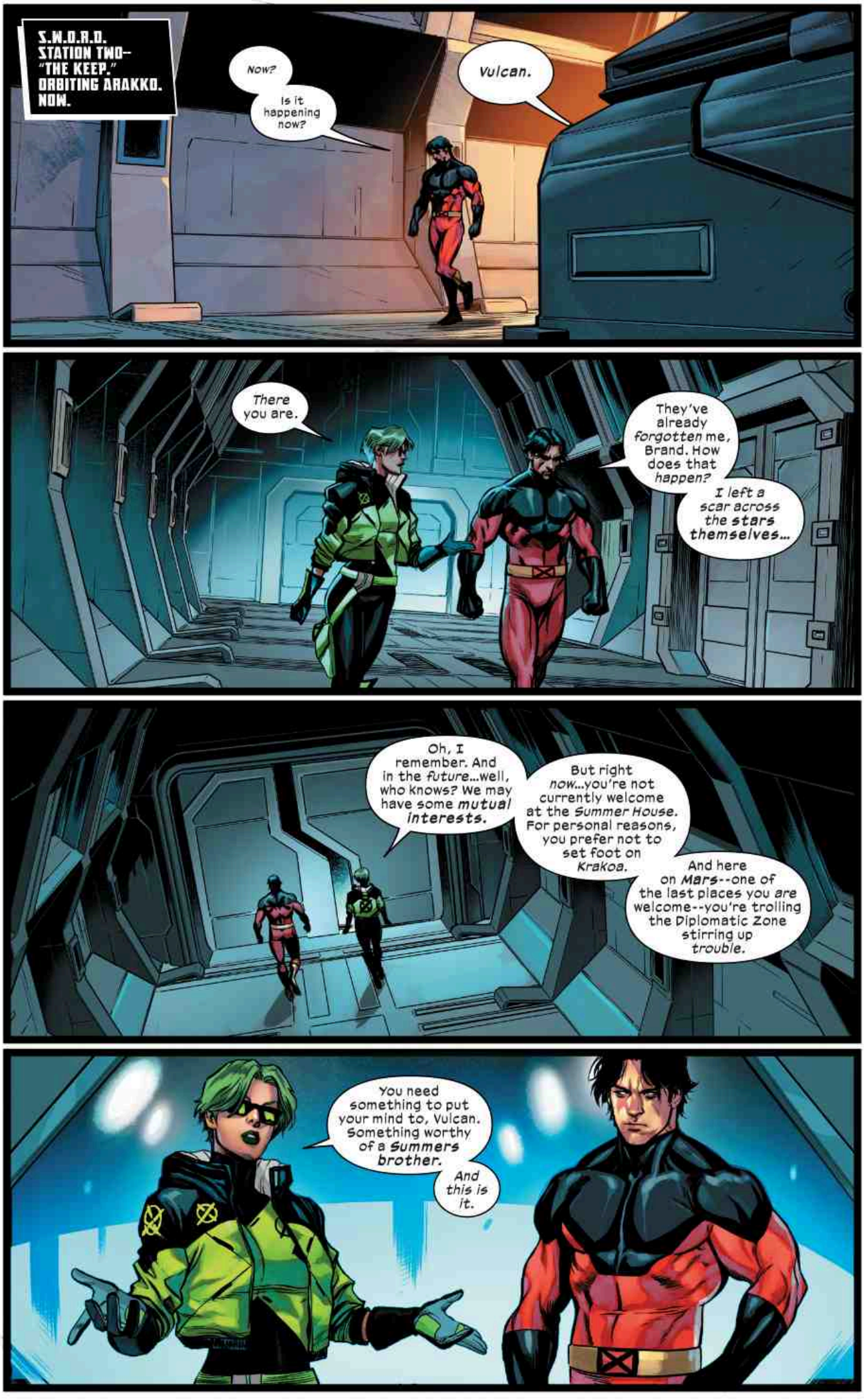

S.W.O.R.D. STATION TWO-- "THE KEEP." ORBITING ARAKKO. NOW.
Now?
Is it happening now?
Vulcan.
There you are.
They've already forgotten me, Brand. How does that happen?
I left a scar across the stars themselves...
Oh, I remember. And in the future...well, who knows? We may have some mutual interests.
But right now...you're not currently welcome at the Summer House. For personal reasons, you prefer not to set foot on Krakoa.
And here on Mars--one of the last places you are welcome--you're trolling the Diplomatic Zone stirring up trouble.
You need something to put your mind to, Vulcan. Something worthy of a Summers brother.
And this is it.

Meet X-Men Red. The X-Men of Mars.
Mentallo. Frenzy. Random. Manifold. And the field leader-- Cable.
Field leader? So I'm taking orders from my nephew?
I was a leader of empires, Brand--and I led from the front.
Wonderful. A team player.
It's bad enough you're pulling me off diplomatic work for this circus, Brand--
This is diplomatic work, Frenzy. Krakoan-Arakkii relations.
The Arakkii need to know there's a S.W.O.R.D. team watching over them.
Why's that, then?
Excuse me...?
I'm with Frenzy. How's this our remit?
Arakko's got its own culture, its own government... They want their own X-team, they can do it.
It's their planet, isn't it?
The parts we allowed them are theirs, yes. The rest is the Diplomatic Zone. Mars hasn't left the Sol System, Eden.
No matter what Arakko might think.

I'm out.
You're quitting the squad?
I'm quitting *all* of it. I'm ***done.***
I'll go be an Avenger again or something.
Just like that? Little *drastic,* surely?
You were practically my ***second-in-command...***
Was I?
What happened to ***Henry Gyrich,*** Abby?
I *told* you--Gyrich jumped out of an air lock. I couldn't save him.
I could've.
You could barely move, as I recall...
Oh, yeah. I'd just *caught a space station.*
Just an accident it fell on *my home* after one of *your plans,* right?
A nice, ***convenient*** *accident.*
You know what they say, Abby.
Fool me once.

We'll continue this later.
Cable-- can you bodyslide a team this size?
If need be.
Then you're transport. And if you've got a way to make miniature suns, you can do that too.
And for the record? Let's say--as a hypothetical--that I did throw Henry Peter Gyrich out of an air lock.
Is there anyone left in this room who'd have a problem with that?
CLK-CLAK
All right, then. Wiz-Kid's minding Station One, so Arakko's got my undivided attention today.
Let's see if we have time to get to know each other before--
Looks like I jinxed it.
Apologies, X-Men...

"...but duty calls."
THE MORROWLANDS. A COMMUNE OF ARTISTS AND POETS, SEEKING NEW PURPOSE ON THEIR NEW WORLD. BUT THEY STILL REMEMBER THE PRISONS.
//TEST-BED 7C4/PROTOCOL ACTIVE//
//LOCATE INFORMATION//
//LOCATE INFORMATION//
THEY STILL REMEMBER THE WAR.
Not without a fight! You hear me, outworlders? Arakko is not afraid!
Arakko is not afraid of a life that ends!
Bodyslide by five.
Brand-- this is Cable. We have an incursion by the Progenitors.
Progenitors? Those giant weirdos have a name?
What's their deal?
The short version? A Worldmind-level civilization of unethical space scientists with computer brains.
They build artificial solar systems in the gulfs between galaxies. Treat entire worlds like petri dishes.
Last time they made an incursion into known space, it took the Guardians and the Kree/Skrull Royal Couple to turn them back.
You have your work cut out.

I always do.
From what I remember, that green one's ***Harvester-Class***--high-level telekinetic.
Figure I'm the one to take *him* on...
What the--
//INFORMATION LOCATED//
//INTERFACING//
Aaahhh!
//HARVESTING//

//INFORMATION UPLOADED//
//TRANSMITTING//
Cable--it just ate your arm--
No--hhn--it ate my techno-organic viral load.
Without that balancing me--my telekinesis runs out of control--
//ERROR?/SYST?M D?SRUPTION//
//CRIT?CAL E?%O?////
--but that's their problem!
//THREAT DETECTED//
//CALIBRATING//
//END THREAT//
Cable!

Brand-- this is *Frenzy!* Cable's down-- repeat, *Cable is dead--*
Arakkii! Will we let Krakoans give their lives for our land?
Every drop of their blood shed is a challenge! A challenge by insult!
And Oris Light-Shaper will not yield!
//THREAT DETECTED//
//END THREAT//
She--she barely had a *power!* She made *glowing cubes!*
These idiots don't stand a chance...
This is their *home,* Mentallo. You can't expect them not to fight for it--
Mentallo's *right,* Frenzy.
Vulcan? Initiate *civilian rescue protocol.* Round up the Arakkii and get them to a safe distance.
And *enforce* that distance.

Brand, that's the *wrong move*--the Arakkii don't see themselves as *civilians.*
We need to work with them--on *their terms*--
"Work with" a *pitiful, powerless rabble?*
Please.
Run and *hide,* rabble.
The X-*Men* are here to *save* you...
Soft Krakoan pup! Who are *you?*
The beasts threaten all *we've built*--and you ***stand in our way...?***
A few meager *shacks*--
Our homes! Our work!
I sang our song at the *final siege,* Krakoan! ***Where were you?***
Who are you to look me in the eye?
Your ***emperor.*** And if you want to lose the other eye, you can ***test*** that--
Eh?
Challenge accepted.
Aaahhh!!!
People of the Morrowlands...

...the Brotherhood of Arakko have heard the challenge--and we consider it a challenge to all.
May we answer?
Ororo!
Ororo answered the all-challenge! Ororo who tamed the Circle!
And the Unarmed King is with her... who ruled at midnight...
Unarmed King...? Is that you, Fisher?
A few old talesmiths spinning their tales, Roberto. It's not to do with the here and now.
That floating head give you any thoughts, Max?
It's a form of magnetic levitation--but it's fighting me.
I know asking for help is frowned on here, but if I could get a distraction...
Help's not help when it's all of us--then, it's tactics.
You'll pick up the nuances.

Morrowlanders! Art-makers of Arakko! The Fisher King calls!
Our enemy comes for knowledge, and it has many faces-- but you've many talents! A fresh new sight for each eye!
So pick an eye--
--and show it all you know!
Ha! I see the Fisherman's mind!
Musicians too! Raise your cacophonies--
//EXTRANEOUS INFORMATION//
//PROCESSING/ PR?CESSI?G ER??R//
--and we'll break the beast with beauty!
...
There.
CLICK

Victory!
Hail Arakko! Hail our Brotherhood!
Ah...my favorite kind of mission. The kind where I get paid for letting someone else finish.
What about you, Emperor Snowcone?
Having fun down there...?
N-no...
I'm not done...I never died...
I NEVER DIED!
Who are you, Arakkii? Who are any of you to challenge me?
I am an emperor! An X-Man! A son of Summer!
I am VULCAN--the son of Mars--
Goddess--

And I am the Mother.
You manipulate energy--so do I. You are an Omega-level mutant--so am I.
This is not a clash of mutant weapons. This is a battle of will.
Feel the power circle us--building from one to the other. Seeking a weakness, a break in our armor...
A flaw.
You speak of a fire that burns inside you. A flame dancing in the wind.
Inside me, child...
...is the hurricane.
KA-KROOM
No thrones on Arakko, Emperor.
Pass it on.

That went relatively well, I thought.

Was I a little worried when the Progenitors arrived so completely on schedule? To the very second? Yes, I was. I'll have to teach Orbis Stellaris something about subtlety -- it can't look too much like I call down threats to Arakko to order. And, obviously, we won't be able to use the Progenitors again for a while, as easy as they are for Stellaris to program. We'll have to think of another intergalactic act of God if we need to do this again in a hurry -- maybe I'll get in touch with that Skrull separatist who's running the Chitauri these days?

Thankfully, Cable won't remember the fine details when he resurrects. Or guess that we staged an alien invasion just to collect data on his techno-organic viral package -- and how he controls it at high concentration.

I've had word from ORCHIS through the usual dead drop. The data went through without a hitch -- together with what they've managed to collect from other sources, it should give them a strong hand to play against Krakoa. And once they've played their cards, I can play mine.

ORCHIS are big thinkers in some ways, frustratingly small in others. It's a straight fight between mutants and humans for them, and if I'm not on one side, I must be on the other -- like their pet Judas in Fourth Petal. I don't think they understand what a truly far-reaching idea looks like...except maybe for Karima. If I'm reading over this from an egg, it might be because I underestimated her.

Like I underestimated Storm.

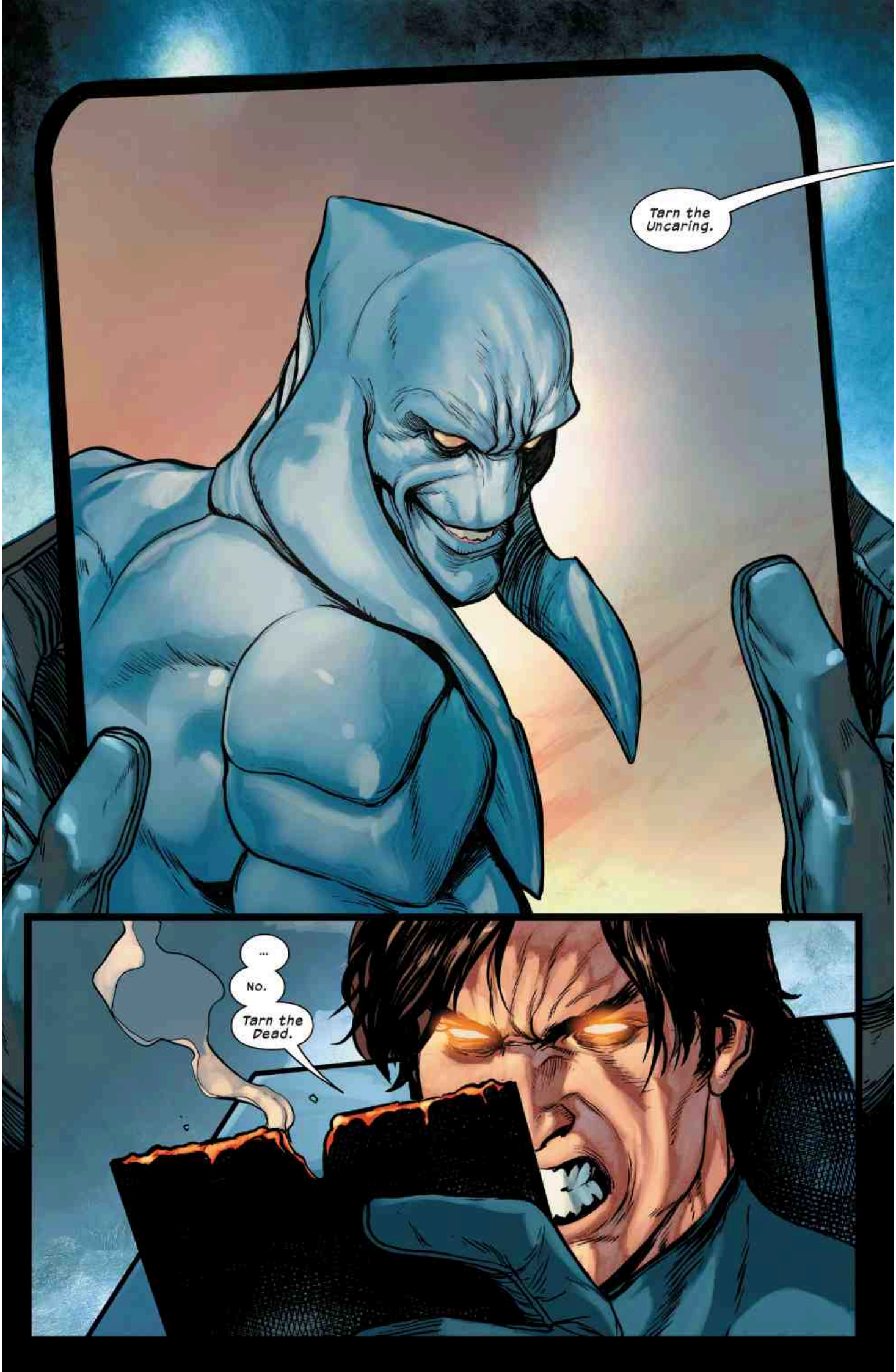
I called down the Progenitors, got the data and did my best to firebomb Krakoa/Arakko relations a little. A little pressure to push the Arakkii back to Amenth, so I can make proper use of Mars. But I was blindsided by Storm's commitment to the bit.

Something about this role agrees with her in ways I didn't predict. She survived the Circle -- she remains on the Great Ring -- long after she'd served my purpose for her there. Now the Arakkii treat her like one of their own. And in return, she's built a team of her own to protect them for real -- by their own rules -- that makes my team look like...well, like a false flag operation with an X slapped on top of it.

I thought I was getting the Queen of Wakanda -- instead, I got the Queen of the Morlocks. I need to adjust for that. I need to stop trying to work Ororo and start working around her.

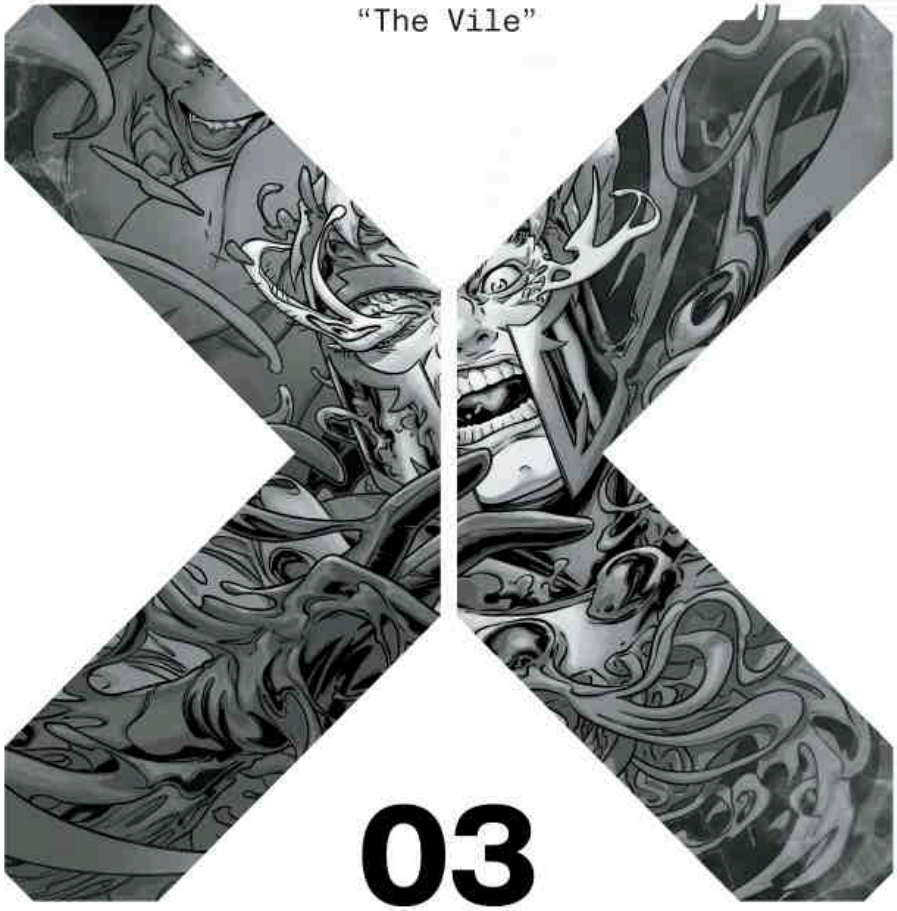
And that means I need my own man on the Great Ring.

S.W.O.R.D. STATION TWO.
"THE KEEP."
Is it happening now?
You're being *healed*, if that's what you mean. And for what it's worth-- I'm *sorry*, Gabriel.
I wasn't using you to your *full potential*.
Yes. The *shell*.
She only fought the shell...
That's one way to put it, sure. You mostly use your power on a *surface level*--which is natural.
Ororo was trained in the use of her powers at the *highest level*--you've been *alone* all these years. Stick with me and I can *help* with that.
Besides... there are ***other*** kinds of power.
I need a man inside the ***Great Ring,*** Vulcan. Someone who sees things *my way*.
And if you want the locals to speak *your* name like they do Ororo's, there's a way to earn that in *one kill*.
By executing their ***bogeyman***.
Arakko's pain has a *face*.
Does it have a name?
It does.


Tarn the Uncaring.
...
NO.
Tarn the Dead.

NEXT

"The Vile"



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